



# what's up?

## physical activity

### INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WHO CARE ABOUT TEENS

#### What's it all about?

Every teen needs his or her own type of physical activity for optimal health. Some teens enjoy and participate in team sports. Others may feel awkward about their bodies, and don't want to look clumsy in front of their peers. Alternatives to team activities include weight training, jogging, biking, rollerblading, skateboarding, dancing, and swimming.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends participating in moderate and vigorous physical activity each week. Teens need to be encouraged to be active and have opportunities available to them to meet the following recommendations:

- Moderate physical activity, equivalent to brisk walking, 30 minutes a day, at least 10 minutes at a time, 5 or more days a week.
- Vigorous physical activity—such as jogging—for at least 20 minutes a day, 3 or more days a week.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that social support from family and friends has been “consistently and positively related to regular physical activity.” So as an adult in a teen's life, it's time to get started!

#### Why does it matter?

- The habits formed in youth DO make a difference when we get older. Staying fit lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes—the leading causes of premature death.
- Physical activity helps self-esteem and reduces stress. It promotes a positive self-image and a sense of achievement.
- Regular physical activity helps teens learn to meet challenges.
- The benefits of physical activity are remarkable:
  - weight control
  - lower blood pressure
  - lower cholesterol
  - improved cardiovascular system
  - increased energy and stamina
  - stronger immune system
  - increased suppleness and flexibility
  - stronger, more toned muscles
  - stronger bones

#### What are the details?

According to the 2002 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey:

- Older students are less likely than younger students to engage in vigorous cardiovascular exercise. About 80% of 6th graders say they participated in vigorous physical activity meeting the Surgeon General's recommendation compared to about 65% of 12th graders.
- Generally, boys are more likely than girls to engage in vigorous physical activity. For instance, among 12th graders, about 70% of boys engage in vigorous physical activity 3 or more days a week as compared to about 55% of girls.
- Only about a third of students in 8th, 10th and 12th grade say they participated in moderate physical activity meeting the Surgeon General's recommendation.
- Older students are less likely to report attending physical education class. About 70% of 8th graders attend physical education classes in an average week as compared to about 40% of 12th graders.
- About a quarter of adolescents surveyed were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WHO CARE ABOUT TEENS

### What can I do?

As an adult in a teen's life, you can jump in and make a difference.

- Get involved as a participant or spectator. When a parent enjoys physical activities regularly, teens are more likely to follow suit.
- Encourage older teens to walk or bike to school and nearby locations.
- Provide options, from organized team sports to individual activities like skating, biking and snow sports.
- Encourage teens to exercise for fun and fitness. Get your teen involved in life-long recreational sports such as swimming, jogging, hiking and canoeing.

### What can schools and communities do?

- Work with community groups and city staff to identify and promote, repair or build sidewalks and bike paths, especially within 2 miles of all schools.
- Support the development and maintenance of safe community parks and playfields.
- Work with school districts to assure that school gyms, pools and tracks are open to individuals before and after school hours, evenings and weekends.
- Provide information to teachers on how to incorporate physical activity into their lessons.
- Develop school district policies that require every student to take a physical education class each day with a minimum of 30 minutes of movement.
- Support full implementation of the "Health and Fitness Essential Academic Learning Requirements" developed as part of Washington's Education Reform Act.



**hot  
links!**

**Best Practices to Promote Physical Activity** [www.doh.wa.gov/HERE/howto/images/BPPPhys.html](http://www.doh.wa.gov/HERE/howto/images/BPPPhys.html)  
Washington State Department of Health

**Physical Activity and Health (CDC)** [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physicalactivity/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physicalactivity/index.htm)

**Fitness and Sports** [www.medem.com/MedLB/articleslb.cfm?sub\\_cat=405](http://www.medem.com/MedLB/articleslb.cfm?sub_cat=405)  
Medical Library

**Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2002** [www3.doh.wa.gov/HYS/](http://www3.doh.wa.gov/HYS/)

**Action for Healthy Kids** [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)  
Promoting children's nutrition and physical activity in schools

**Be Healthy. Be Active.** [www.beactive.org/adoles.html](http://www.beactive.org/adoles.html)  
Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity

**Kids Health** [www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/index.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/index.html)  
Age-appropriate information on nutrition and fitness for parents, teens and kids

**Health and Fitness Essential Academic Learning Requirements**  
[www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/healthfitness/ealrs.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/healthfitness/ealrs.aspx)  
Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Washington State Department of Health  
DOH Pub 910-118 11/2003  
[www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)

Resources listed here are provided as a public service and do not imply endorsement by the State of Washington.

References for source materials are available from the Child and Adolescent Health program, 360-236-3547.

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. Please call 1-800-525-0127.



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**Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team**

# P R I N T I N G   S P E C I F I C A T I O N S

**Title:**    **What's Up? Information for Adults Who Care About Teens  
"Physical Activity" Fact Sheet**

**Size:**    8.5 x 11

**Paper stock:**    80# text white gloss

**Ink color:**    4-color process

**Special instructions:**    2-sided printing with full bleeds

**DOH Pub #:**    910-118